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Author:

U.S. Bureau of foreign
and domestic commerce

Title:

Wartime guide for retail
grocers

Place:

[Washington D.C.]

Date:

[1943]

94-82040-9
MASTER NEGATIVE #

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

BUSINESS
254.5
Un334

U. S. Bureau of foreign and domestic commerce (Dept. of commerce).
Wartime guide for retail grocers. [Washington, Bureau of foreign and domestic commerce, Dept. of commerce, 1943,
cover-title, 48 p. illus. 18 x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ cm.
"Prepared in the Distribution division, Bureau of foreign and domestic commerce, Department of commerce, by Nelson A. Miller."—
p. [2] of cover.

1. Grocery trade—U. S. i. Miller, Nelson Alexander, 1895-
ii. Title. 43-50810
Library of Congress HD9321.6.A52 1943
31 658.9414

RESTRICTIONS ON USE:

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm

REDUCTION RATIO: 9x

IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA IIA IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 4/15/94

INITIALS: WW

TRACKING #: MSH 00315

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

PM-MGP 13"x18"
METRIC GENERAL PURPOSE TARGET
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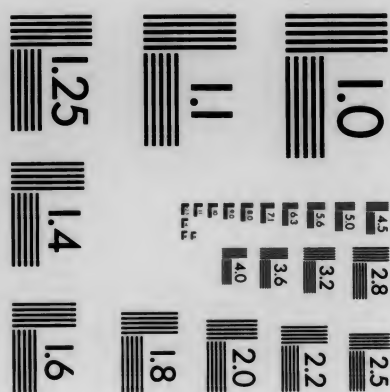


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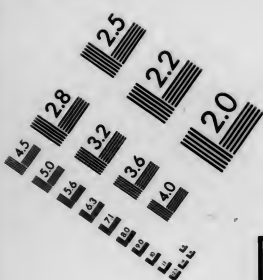
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**WARTIME GUIDE
FOR
RETAIL GROCERS**



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WARTIME GUIDE FOR RETAIL GROCERS

Prepared in the
Distribution Division
Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
by
Nelson A. Miller

★ ★ ★

Reprinted by and available from:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETAIL GROCERS
360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Also available from

Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce,
Washington, D. C., and
the field offices of the Department of Commerce

Reprinted and distributed through the cooperation
of members of

National-American Wholesale Grocers' Association
United States Wholesale Grocers' Association, Inc.
National Voluntary Groups Institute
National Retailer-Owned Grocers, Inc.
National League of Wholesale Fresh Fruit and Vegetable
Distributors
United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association
National Industrial Stores Association
National Food Distributors Association
Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A MESSAGE TO RETAIL GROCERS:

TODAY the responsibility of the retail grocer is greater than ever before. Your job is to make food available to American families in every community in the country under very difficult circumstances. Supplies are short. Help is scarce and inexperienced. Costs are rising, and price and margin controls, coupled with tedious rationing requirements, add to your problems.

To operate under such circumstances is a real challenge to the imagination and ingenuity of management. Obviously this little booklet cannot discuss current and changing wartime regulations and how best to comply with them. These necessary regulations are exacting and add greatly to the task of operating a store.

Rigid operating economies and other store adjustments, however, are possible, and may be the means of saving many grocers who otherwise might be lost. Some ideas on how to economize and adjust to current conditions are presented in this booklet. Many grocers have adopted such measures, and in this way are conserving manpower, equipment, and store supplies, during a critical period when each of us has a part to play.

It takes a stout heart to face and master your many problems today, but in performing your task you are making an essential contribution to the welfare of our civilian population that is vital to the war effort.

JESSE H. JONES,
Secretary of Commerce.

2-12034

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Business

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**A QUICK
GLANCE
at What We
Have to Say**



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The Grocer Performs an INDISPENSABLE Service in His Community

FIRST, let there be no mistake about this: The service of the retail grocer in wartime is just as essential to the civilian life of our country as the soldier is to the military success of our armed forces. The grocer is performing a most important service of which he justly can be proud.

The customer depends on her nearby grocer more now than ever before. Your main job is to do as good a buying job for her as is humanly possible. In addition, the grocer today must be prepared to give advice on:

1. **WHY** many food products are scarce.
2. **WHY** service is not what you would like it to be.
3. **HOW** to use ration coupons to the best advantage
4. **WHAT** products can be substituted for those you cannot get, or for which the customer's ration coupons are not sufficient.
5. **HOW** to use and prepare special food products
6. **WHY** price control is necessary.
7. **HOW** rationing keeps a few people from getting all of the scarce goods.

Although the war has caused many inconveniences to the retailer and to the consumer, no one who is really sincere about making wartime "sacrifice" should complain about them.

COURTESY

**comes hard sometimes,
but it pays**

IN more normal times, the customer is the boss. Some retailers might forget this under present conditions, but the present situation is only temporary. You are still your customer's buying agent. Treat her fairly in prices, weights, and in other ways during this period of scarce supplies and shortages of help. Courtesy and fair dealing practiced now should pay good returns after the war.

Courtesy does not come easy, because some customers have a habit of being very troublesome, unreasonable, and even abusive. Nerves get frayed after a hard day in the store, but no matter how much you may want to throw a tin can at an overbearing customer, it is much wiser to smile and take it. It pays in the long run, and any clerks working for you should be set right on this point. Don't forget, the customer is "always" right.



★ ★ **The "Whys" and "Hows" of**

IN order to explain to your customers why you must economize, save equipment and materials, and reduce services, you must have a good understanding of the situation. Here it is:

Supplies

Supplies are short because of:

1. Increased consumption by families who are making more money.
2. Heavy consumption by members of the Armed Forces, who eat more than they did as civilians.
3. Food shipped to our allies, as part of our share in fighting the war.
4. Low ceiling prices which discourage the handling of some goods.
5. Scarcity of metals and manpower for canning and food manufacturing.
6. Shortages of farm labor.

Help

Help is scarce, because great numbers of grocery store workers have:

1. Joined the Armed Forces.
2. Transferred to better-paying jobs.

Costs

Costs are up because of:

1. Higher wages.
2. Higher prices for store supplies, repairs, etc.
3. Lower sales volume.
4. Pilferage.
5. Wartime records.
6. Inexperienced help.

WARTIME PRESSURES ★ ★ ★

Price Control

The safest course is to expect price control, not only "for the duration," but for some time afterward, because it is one of the principal ways to curb inflation, and inflation is bad for the customer, the retailer, and for everybody else.

Price control may limit the margins you can earn, and make it necessary to **CUT EXPENSES**. Retailers should make definite plans to reduce expenses and make necessary changes voluntarily before circumstances force them to do so.

Rationing

Rationing makes more work for the grocer, and in the larger stores may call for extra help to handle the coupons and other details. Rationing also slows down service to the customer, makes deliveries more of a problem, and also puts the consumer to considerable inconvenience.

But a rationing system of one sort or another is about the only way to *distribute scarce supplies fairly* to all of the people. It also enables the smaller retailer to get his share of rationed goods, because no retailer may secure more of such goods than he has ration coupons.

Regardless of the annoyance of rationing and price control, they must be accepted as a necessary part of the kind of a war we are fighting. The public depends on cooperation between the grocer and the government to keep food prices from "running away." Each grocer is urged to do his part as a duty and a service to the consumer.

HELP IS SCARCE. Use it wisely!

EVEN if you run a "one man" store with members of your family, you are using scarce labor, and scarce labor should be used wisely.

It is desirable to allow a reasonable amount of sick leave and vacation with pay to employees when this can be arranged; also to adjust working hours so that employees will have a half-day off during the week, despite the practice of other stores.

It is unwise to reprimand an employee in the presence of other workers. If you listen to and act on employees' complaints you might improve general conditions in the store.

ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES

to clerks

WHERE several people are employed everyone should be kept busy. Each person should be assigned to some responsibility inside or outside the store. There are many jobs such as cleaning up the store and keeping it clean, attending to the fruit and vegetable displays, replenishing and straightening out the stock, etc.

If your store is large enough, separate clerks can be designated in charge of each department. In such cases it is advisable to give them a chance to use their initiative and ingenuity in suggesting ways for improving the departments assigned to them—give them responsibilities. The more routine details you can assign in this way, the more time you will have in planning your operations.

SHORTER STORE HOURS

make the job more attractive

THERE are many pros and cons on the subject of reducing store hours. Perhaps the greatest advantage in reducing store hours is that the employees would have shorter working hours individually, and would be more contented with their work.

By opening later in the morning, or closing earlier at night, you may avoid the need for part-time labor, or for overtime. Larger stores employing more than one shift may reduce to a one-shift operation. It is usually desirable to seek the cooperation of other merchants when planning shorter operating hours. It is still possible, however, that even one store may reduce its hours without losing sufficient sales volume to cancel the savings in expense which might result from the shorter schedule.

Unnecessary overtime should be avoided. Analyze the reasons for all overtime and try to eliminate the causes.



★ **More WOMEN WORKERS are**

WOMEN today are sought for all kinds of war jobs, and they are proving to be excellent workers in a great variety of jobs, including work in factories that no one ever considered women able to handle.

About 40 percent of grocery employees are now women, and they are working out very satisfactorily when properly selected and trained. There is a good possibility of using women drivers for your delivery routes, and girls can draw delivery hand-wagons and make bicycle deliveries as well as boys.

The handling of full cases of canned foods is probably too much for the average woman, so, in stocking shelves, have goods hand trucked to proper shelf positions, and have the cases opened by men. Then women can mark the cans with proper prices and ration points, and put the items on the shelves.

needed ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Women are good housekeepers—use this ability by letting them be responsible for keeping the store tidy. Also they can arrange and care for fruit and vegetable displays. Haul the produce in from the back room on a counter-high truck.

Before hiring women, however, your State laws should be checked because in some states women are not permitted to lift or handle parcels over a certain weight. Some State laws also govern the number of days per week, the number of hours per week, and minimum pay for women workers.



Try to operate with **FEWER**

WORKERS

CONSIDER carefully before replacing employees who are drafted or leave for war industries. Under wartime conditions you may be able to get along with a smaller staff, even though you cannot give the service you would like to. Perhaps jobs can be combined or consolidated. Everyone must expect to work a little harder. Perhaps this will require some special training and supervision on your part, or better equipment, or better organization.

If it is necessary to replace employees, older men, and boys under 18 should be sought, in addition to women. It is not advisable to hire people who are likely to leave you soon—those subject to the draft, or eligible for work in war industries. The retailer cannot expect the "cream" of the labor force during the war.

Many grocers are past masters in the use of part-time help. For some years past, high school boys have been used on Saturdays to help in the store and to make deliveries. Now grocers are using housewives from 9 A. M. to 4 P. M., and high school boys from 4 P. M. to closing during the week.

Before hiring minors, check on Federal and State regulations governing their employment. If your local association cannot give you the information, write to the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.

and recruit **PART - TIME** help

What is your "**OUTPUT PER MAN**"?

Set up a goal by which you can measure the effectiveness of your use of manpower. This goal may be expressed in terms of sales per employee per month, and will be different for different kinds of stores and in different localities, so the total figures should be set up separately for each store. First, calculate your average sales per full-time worker in the store, including the proprietor if he is principally engaged in regular store duties; then check with other grocers in your community who you consider to be good operators, and who are operating the same class and size of store as your own. Work with members of your local trade association and with your wholesalers to arrive at standards of good performance. If you find that some grocers are able to secure a greater "output per man", set your sights to this higher level, and try to operate with a staff based on this performance.



★ ★ ★ **WRAPPING EXPENSE**

WRAPPINGS account for expense equal to one-tenth to one-fifth of a grocer's net profit. Are you doing all you can to convert this expense into profit? Here are some ideas that have helped cut paper costs by two-thirds for grocers who have used them.

Use manufacturers' cartons instead of paper bags wherever possible. Many customers really prefer the cartons, because of their greater strength. When cartons get really scarce, encourage customers to return cartons for re-use. Write on them "Please return this box". Have a place where the boxes can be left by the customers as they enter the store. Drivers also can bring back the empties. And take good care of the cartons yourself—open them carefully, and stack them where they will not be trampled.

Egg cartons are expensive, and can be used several times, if you can get customers to return them.

Where you use paper bags, pack them carefully and pack them full. Never use a big bag where a small one will do. But a bag too small is just as bad. Your customers have found this out! Don't use small individual bags for goods that don't need them; bread, apples,

can be reduced ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

oranges, and packaged goods can be put directly in the large bag or carton in which the order is assembled. In some self-service stores customers are asked to put fruits and vegetables in their baskets, to be packaged at the check-out counter. Paper bags can be re-used when customers bring them back to the store. The bags should be sorted, folded, put in the proper racks, and used up first.

In the meat department, more careful measuring of moisture-proof paper can result in worth-while savings. Put up a sign to remind clerks and customers of the need for conservation. Save the parchment liners between layers of bacon and frankfurters; you can cut them in half and have extra meat-wrapping paper.

Maybe your store is not big enough to accumulate enough salvage material for sale; some grocers, however, get their trash hauled away free, in exchange for waste paper, boxes that cannot be re-used, and similar forms of waste material. Put a large salvage carton on the floor wherever a man is unpacking merchandise. Throw into the carton every bit of loose cardboard, and small boxes that are not suitable for sending out orders.

Why not sell shopping bags, baskets, and string-net bags? You can reduce the use of paper and increase your sales volume at the same time.

ELECTRICITY can be saved

STOCK piled up near the display window obstructs light and gives a bad appearance. Use more sunlight, keep windows clean, and use less electricity.

Light-colored walls and ceilings look cleaner and brighter and require less lighting.

Electricity is wasted if all lights are turned on before they are needed; every other one may be enough.

Does your last hour of business during the day bring in enough sales to pay for the clerk time and the electricity? Earlier closing may save you money. It is false economy, however, to have the store insufficiently lighted. The principal savings in electricity may be found in the handling of the electrical equipment.

Don't use fans when you don't need them; wait until it really gets warm before you turn them on. Keep fans and other motors properly covered when not in use. This will reduce cleaning and repair bills.

Much power is wasted because of inefficient motors, refrigerators, and electrical machines. It pays to have such equipment checked at regular periods and reconditioned by a competent mechanic. Above all, do not leave coffee mills or other machines running while not in use.

Organize the stock in your meat cooler so that products can be taken out or replaced in the shortest possible time. Are you or your butcher careless about leaving refrigerator doors or display coolers open?

FUEL can be saved

CUSTOMERS are usually dressed for out of doors, and a temperature of 60 degrees is high enough for your store. Moreover, high temperatures are bad for fresh produce.

If you burn coal you may be using more than you need. If you burn oil your saving in fuel is not only an expense reduction, it is a patriotic war conservation measure.

Shortening of store hours will save fuel in the winter time, just as it saves electricity in both summer and winter.



**PILFERAGE can put
a grocer out of business**

MANY grocers report recent increases in pilferage, especially in the larger self-service stores. The many stores which have shifted to a self-service, or a semi-self-service plan due to shortage of help, and even the service stores operating with less help, must be watchful to prevent pilferage. Rationed products are more likely to be "lifted" than other products.

It is a Federal offense to steal rationed items. Your trade association could make up signs announcing this, and they should be placed in a prominent space in the store.

Find out what the losses are—which merchandise — and place it where it can be watched.

Pilferage is a direct and complete loss—a deduction from net profits. It reaches from 2 to 4 percent of sales in some self-service stores, and also large proportions in many service stores. It has put many grocers out of business.

**PILFERAGE calls
for careful supervision**

IT is better to watch customers, and prevent them from pilfering, than to catch them. Ask your trade association for advice before you start to arrest any customers for pilferage, because there is always the danger of false arrest. If you have the help, assign your clerks to keep their eyes on different sections of the store. And above all, do not leave the selling floor unattended. Arrange checkout stations so you can "supervise" the whole floor. If there must be "blind spots" in the layout, put merchandise there which is difficult to pilfer, especially the large items. Some self-service stores even keep a "working supply" of butter at the check-out counter, putting the main supply in a back room.

Watch back-room losses. Prohibit customers and other outsiders in the back room. A rear exit should not be left open and unlocked, and customers should not be permitted to enter or leave by the back door unless there is complete control.

Outgoing deliveries should be checked and supervised. All incoming merchandise should be counted and checked in promptly.

Unfortunately store clerks are sometimes responsible for many cash and bookkeeping leaks and merchandise disappearances from shelves and stock rooms. This calls for careful supervision. Set up a system of checks to prevent this type of leak.

***There is no place for
"CHARITY ADVERTISING"***

ADVERTISING that sells goods in a competitive market may be quite productive even when supplies are scarce, but advertising, like all other expenses, must be carefully examined for possible savings.

The "charity" type of advertising should be eliminated. This includes much of the advertising in booklets, programs, etc., issued by local organizations. Often this type of "advertising" is really a donation and is of doubtful value, especially during a period when wartime economies are necessary.

ADVERTISING

can work for you!

ADVERTISING and personal suggestions directed toward getting customers to shop early in the week should help to level out the week-end peak in business. With rationing, customer handling is slowed up, and the Friday and Saturday peaks become a greater problem than ever.

Advertising can do a job in this connection if used properly. Regardless of business conditions, you must keep your name before the public—your public. If you have a good store, if you still give service and give careful and prompt attention to customers' needs, if you have something to offer, let your customers know about it. When the situation again favors the buyer, the good will you have maintained in your community will pay dividends.

Under rationing, and with less food products purchased per customer, retailers should aggressively advertise to hold more customers in order to keep up sales volume. . . . In his bid for new customers, the retailer must be careful to properly price competitive items. Even though ration points now seem to be more important than money, proper pricing will earn and hold good will.

DIRECT MAIL

and POSTERS help

UNLESS the grocer is affiliated with a co-operative or voluntary group which makes it possible to advertise in local newspapers, about the only advertising means available to the smaller grocer are handbills, postcards and other direct mail, coupled with an intelligent use of store and window posters. Even the smaller retailer, however, in small communities where advertising rates are low, can utilize the local newspaper for advertising.

Today one of the principal uses to which you can put advertising, if you have a small store—especially in a large city—is to help your customers understand the rules of rationing, point values, dates, and proper use of ration books and coupons. Posters in the store are ideal for this. Unless customers are taught the rules and learn to cooperate, there just will not be enough time for the average grocer to handle all of the work attached to rationing, including collecting and accounting for coupons and the "point-marking" of shelf stock.

BRING YOUR CUSTOMERS

BACK HOME

WHEN customers go out of their way to patronize a store that is not the most conveniently located, there is some reason. It may be price, or an old connection, or quality and good selection of merchandise, habit, transportation, place and hours of work, etc.

Generally speaking, there should be advantages to shopping at the nearest store. There would be less moving around and criss-crossing, or "cross-hauling." The retail grocer would have a smaller but more compact trading area, and long delivery runs would be reduced.

The necessary reductions in passenger car use, and the need for easing up the load on public transportation facilities, give customers good reasons for shopping near their homes for their food supplies.

Now is the time to draw in and consolidate your trading area, and to show the nearby consumers that you can serve their needs to good advantage.

It will pay to find out exactly what people in your trading area are not customers of your store, and why. These "whys" should point to ways for improving your store and your service to the community.



What about MARGINS?

WHEN whole classes of merchandise are controlled as to the percentage mark-up, it is no longer possible to make more margin on the "high margin," "fancy" lines, although people are generally willing to buy the higher priced products where goods are scarce and restricted in sale.

The higher priced lines, and the larger sizes of all lines, however, bring in more dollars per transaction, even though the percentage mark-up is the same for all items in a line. These should be segregated, and given prominent display.

The principal way to "average up" the total store gross margin today, is to push the classes of products that carry the better markups, such as fresh fruits and vegetables and other individual products which do carry better than average margins.

Considerable thought should be devoted to better and more prominent displays for such goods.

SLEEPING MERCHANDISE

can cost you money

DURING wartime scarcities, where the main problem is to get something to sell, merchants can easily slide into the bad habit of buying goods that can't be sold. Careful selection of items that will move is still a sound merchandising principle. Turnover today is just as important to profits as it ever was.

Goods that stand on shelves too long may eat into profits, because rent and other overhead charges accumulate against them. Money tied up in such items is not working. These "sleepers" must be cleared out. Remember, price ceilings do not prevent cutting prices to get rid of them. Even in merchandise lines that have a good demand, too many brands, sizes, and prices lead to inventories which may be too high for the sales volume secured.



EXPAND LINES

to increase volume

MANY retailers in different kinds of business have taken on new lines to make up for regular lines lost because of the war. When you take on new lines to use available selling space or to increase sales consider the move from all angles before acting. If a new line is one that some other retailer nearby already handles, consider its effect on his business, and what he might do to retaliate. New lines which are handled by other retailers are more difficult to take on in the small town. Country stores are inclined to "lay off" of the other fellow's lines, and "divide up" the merchandise. This is not so true for city stores, but as a general rule it is well to "stick to your principal and related lines."

As a general rule, the rural store has a fine opportunity to lean more to the general merchandise lines—preferably staples with a fair turnover.

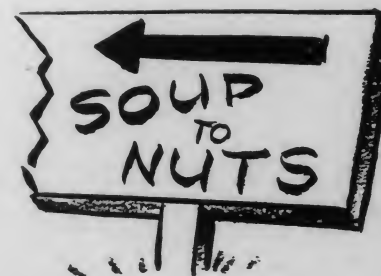
A COMPLETE FOOD STORE

is suggested

IN the grocery store, all sorts of food products which are available and which will sell, may be logically added. It is good business for the grocer to provide a complete food service so the customer can find most of her food needs in one store.

Some of the larger food stores have a well established and profitable luncheon service, but this is only recommended for those stores which are large enough to carry such a service and where it would not be subject to competition from nearby restaurants or drug store soda fountains. Some outlying stores have found it profitable to make up sandwiches, sliced pie, milk and soft drinks for lunches for nearby construction workers or other groups temporarily working in the vicinity.

The following section lists a number of lines that may be added to make a complete food store. Check this list to see what items you can add.



Check this list for ITEMS to ADD

(This list assumes that the regular lines are already carried, such as canned and bottled foods, flour, cereals, biscuits and cookies, dried fruits and vegetables, soaps and cleansers.)

Perishable Food Products:

Fresh fruits	Smoked-cured meats,
Fresh vegetables	sausages, bologna,
Fish, oysters, seafood	etc.
Fresh meats	Poultry and game
Bread, cakes and	Eggs
other perishable	Milk, cream, butter
bakery products	and cheese

Delicatessen Goods:

(Some of these you can prepare yourself, others might be prepared for you by a nearby restaurant. These items are suitable generally only in city stores.)

Salads (potato, chicken, etc.)	Baked chickens, turkeys and hams,
Baked pork and beans	whole, pieces, or sliced
Pickles	Relishes
Sauer kraut	Preserves
Pickled pigs feet	Cottage cheese
	Slaw

Confectionery — nuts, including gift fruit and candy assortments

Cigars, Cigarettes, Tobacco

Wines, Beer and Liquor (where local laws permit)

for a complete grocery store

Household Supplies:

Brooms	Mouse traps
Candles	Paint cleaners
Cord	Paper goods:
Can Openers	Cups
Canning Supplies:	Napkins
Jars and caps	Plates
Rubber rings	Towels, etc.
Wax	Paper towel racks
Charcoal briquets	Paste
Clothes lines	Polishing cloths
Clothes pins	Scrub brushes
Dish cloths	School supplies
Dish mops	Shoe polish
Disinfectants	Silver polish
Dust cloths	Shopping bags
Dust pans	Sponges
Electric bulbs	Toilet tissue
Floor mops	Toothpicks
Floor wax	Vegetable brushes
Furniture polish	Vegetable and coffee strainers
Household glue	Wash boards
Household oil	Water pails
Insecticides	Wax paper
Ironing board pads	Window cleaners
Ice picks	
Mops and handles	

Victory Carts, Wagons and Baskets, for grocery delivery

Frozen Foods (as equipment becomes available)

Garden Supplies (seeds, plants, fertilizer)

Poultry and Animal Feed (where there is a demand)

★ ★ A GOOD STORE LAYOUT

THE appearance and general arrangement of a food store should never be neglected. The trade papers serving the retail grocer have emphasized this point for a long time, and many suggestions and ideas, with pictures and floor plans, are available in these publications. It is well to keep several principles in mind on this subject:

1. *Wider aisles* help customer circulation and facilitate their selection of merchandise.
2. *Open display and shelving* of the self-service variety are desirable whether you adopt self-service or not.
3. *Lower fixtures* make it easier for the customers to reach merchandise and to see from one corner of the store to the other. This not only helps the customer to find her way around and locate merchandise quickly, but it enables the grocer to supervise the selling floor more effectively.
4. *Remove boxes* in front of tables and counters. They make it difficult for customers to reach goods or to receive service at counters, besides they may cause customer injuries.

is necessary ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

5. Adequate space and facilities should be devoted to *fresh fruits and vegetables*, one of your most profitable lines if handled properly.
If maximum profits are to be made in the produce department losses due to spoilage must be kept at a minimum. This means constant care and attention to produce, but it pays.
6. Give prominent display, perhaps a special section of the store, to **NON-RATIONED GOODS**, and push these items.
7. Do not neglect proper display space for *pre-packaged bulk goods*.
8. Ask your clerks and butchers for *suggestions* as to store layout and displays. Often they will see economies and possible improvements but will hesitate to give you the benefit of their suggestions unless you invite them to participate in such matters.
9. *The store should be kept as clean as possible* all through the selling day and when business is slack the store should be cleaned and straightened up. Why wait until all of your customers have gone before you show your store to the best advantage?
10. Give constant attention to insure *clean display windows* and attractive window displays. The appearance of your store front is very important and it is easy to neglect.
11. Well thought-out stock arrangement and departmentalization are important aids in selling and stock control.

SELF-SERVICE

is favored by many grocers

SELF-SERVICE has made rapid advances in grocery stores during the last two or three years. One survey indicates that about 2 out of every 3 independent stores with sales of more than \$20,000 a year are now operated either on a self-service or a semi-self-service plan.

Undoubtedly many more stores could still adopt this plan of operation profitably.

Of the semi-self-service stores about half have a delivery service, so there are still many stores that can take advantage of the present opportunity to cut down delivery expense. Customers are ready for it, and even expect it!

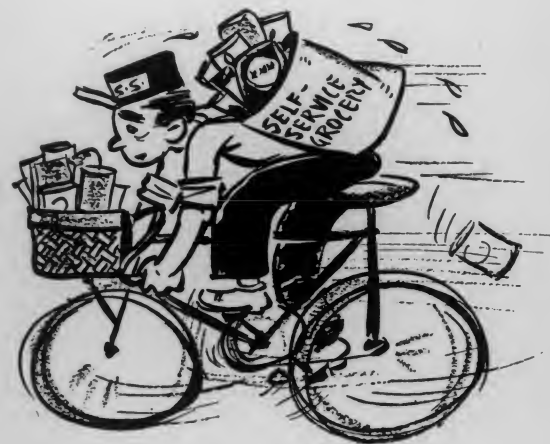
Experience has proved that the self-service or semi-self-service plan, with a delivery and credit service reduced to minimum basis, is one of the most effective types of operation.

SELF-SERVICE

does not mean "cash and carry"

THERE is much confusion over the term "self-service" in grocery store operation. In most highly developed "self-service" operations, usually there still is service at the meat counter, at the coffee mill, and often at the fresh fruit and vegetable department. Most independent stores which have shifted to "self-service" are really operating on a semi-self-service plan. This plan has all of the outward appearances of complete self-service, but the proprietor or one or more of his helpers are available for service to those customers who require it.

Self-service does not mean "cash and carry." A recent survey of independent self-service stores shows that more than one-third of them have a delivery service and nearly half extend credit.



SELF-SERVICE

cuts costs and increases sales

LABOR costs, the big expense item, are much less in self-service stores than in clerk-service stores doing the same volume of business. Labor costs average around 10 per cent in service stores, and about 5 per cent in super-markets and self-service stores. As wages rise and it becomes harder to get help, the advantages of the self-service plan cannot be ignored.

Self-service has other advantages. It often increases sales because customers sell themselves more goods when they are able to see them and reach them. The sales of higher-profit merchandise can be increased through display in favorable locations. More customers pay cash, because self-service suggests cash-and-carry to them. Cash can be controlled better through the check-out system, with fewer losses.

SELF-SERVICE

makes grocers' job easier

PEAK crowds can be handled more easily, for more customers can be accommodated at one time. Self-service brings customers INTO THE STORE, enables you to cut down on telephone orders, and encourages customers to carry their orders instead of having them delivered. This does not mean that telephone orders should be eliminated. (See next page.)

During these periods of food shortages and decreasing varieties, customers shopping in a store with a self-service layout, can see just what is in stock, and what brands and sizes are available. This avoids endless conversation at the counter, frayed nerves, and arguments. The customers will do their own substituting if they see the complete stock of available goods. Moreover, when customers themselves select their purchases, there is bound to be a reduction of returned goods.



**Many customers still need service—
do not leap to SELF-SERVICE
without looking**

IT is well to remember that some of the largest and most profitable independent grocery stores and a great many successful smaller stores are "service" stores. It is not practical nor advisable for *all* grocery stores in the country to shift to the self-service plan, because there are a great many customers, including the most profitable ones, who require service, and are willing to pay for it.

In addition, there are a great many customers, not necessarily large buyers, who require telephone delivery, and credit service. These include older people and invalids not able to do their own shopping and also working couples, housewives, and other individuals who find it impossible to do their grocery buying during regular store hours, or who live at some distance from the store.

**SELF-SERVICE ADVANTAGES
must not be overlooked**

AS an expense and labor saving move, self-service is very attractive, and under war-time conditions, these factors are extremely important.

The best advice seems to be that your plan of operation should "lean" toward the self-service or semi-self-service plan, with open display, and with a provision for only a *minimum* amount of delivery and credit service, merely sufficient to hold the greatest amount of profitable business.

If help gets too tight, it might be wise to adopt a complete self-service plan, with steaks, roasts, poultry, etc., cut, packaged, and priced; and scales and bags handy for the produce department. The coffee mill can be operated at the check-out counter.

If you are contemplating self-service operations, it would be wise to find out whether you can secure a *listing* cash register, because they are not being manufactured under present war-time restrictions. Second-hand registers might be found in the hands of dealers. Adding machines of "small capacity" can be used effectively, and are still available to a limited extent. The adding machine detail tape can be stapled to the cash register receipt, which will show the total of each sale.

Get in touch with your trade association or your favorite trade paper for layout and stock arrangement details for self-service.

CUT DELIVERY SCHEDULES

THE government is helping to conserve tires and gasoline by restricting retail deliveries. Your costs should be reduced by cooperating. At present you are required to eliminate special deliveries and call backs, and to limit the number of deliveries to each customer. In addition to this, you are required to cut your delivery mileage.

But you can cut your delivery costs even beyond the reductions resulting from specific ODT orders. *Cut your deliveries to three a week, and place a minimum size on delivery orders. You might also reduce your delivery area.*

To handle the Saturday peak load in deliveries, some grocers do not accept delivery orders on Saturday, requiring customers to get their orders in by noon Friday for Saturday delivery. Deliveries all through the week can be scheduled better if no orders are accepted for delivery the same day ordered.

A small charge for delivery service, now permitted by O. P. A., has the immediate effect of sharply reducing the number of delivery orders, and increasing the proportion of cash business.

Study and STREAMLINE YOUR DELIVERY SERVICE

MAKE greater use of hand wagons and bicycles. High school boys and even girls, can handle this work, say from 4 p. m. to closing.

Fewer delivered orders per week usually mean larger individual orders. Some grocers have increased the load capacity of their truck by having a larger body built on the chassis.

Never send out a truck half full; use standard size containers (old cartons); put shelves in trucks; build a small order compartment reached from the driver's seat.

But above all, the greatest economies can be gained by carefully planning and scheduling deliveries so that the least possible mileage will be used.

Spot your delivery customers on a map and work out the best plan for your own store. After you do this you might find it advisable to eliminate delivery to some customers who take your trucks too far out of the way.



POOL DELIVERIES

with other grocers

WHAT about pooling your delivery with other grocers, and with druggists, hardwaremen, etc.? Real savings in delivery cost are possible, and delivery equipment can be conserved in this way. It may be best to set up a separate company to handle the pooled delivery.

Some successful delivery "pools" are very informal. For example two near-by retailers may rotate the use of their trucks every day.

The Office of Defense Transportation will give you advice and assistance in the development of your program, and will secure approval from the Department of Justice for all plans that are lawful under the Anti-Trust Acts. You should file your plan with the Office of Defense Transportation, whether or not you have used their assistance in setting it up.

Consider whether you could not use a hired service more economically than your own delivery system. This has worked out in some smaller towns where one man handles the deliveries for all the local retailers at a flat rate per week.

The Present Scale of RATIONING FORCES A SHARP REDUCTION IN DELIVERIES

RATIONING, at the present time, covers most of the items handled by the retail grocer. This has a direct bearing on deliveries because drivers often must be charged with the responsibility of collecting the correct amount of ration coupons. Such collections not only slow down deliveries, which must be operated on the most efficient basis possible today, but often it may not be possible to make the delivery if the customer is not at home when the order arrives, because of the need for collecting ration coupons for so many food products under present requirements. Office of Defense Transportation restrictions on deliveries, however, have had much more effect on reducing deliveries than rationing. Even though it is burdensome in some instances for the deliveryman to collect the ration stamps, many stores are continuing the delivery of rationed products successfully.

If you do have your driver collect ration coupons, it would seem safer to enter on the sales slip the ration points opposite each item, and a total to be collected, along with the prices of the items.

Today's food rationing regulations are putting a definite curb on deliveries, and especially telephone orders. As long as rationing continues on the present scale there is little choice in the matter of reducing delivery service.

CUT CREDIT to the bone

THE average grocer is no credit man, and now is the time to cut credit to the bone, or eliminate it entirely.

Credit has killed off more grocers than is generally recognized. When you suffer a credit loss you lose both the merchandise and the profits, and usually the customer. A large number of profitable sales are required to make up one credit loss. Moreover, credit accounts take up much time and cost money for bookkeepers, stationery and postage, and tie up your capital in customers' accounts. Clean up your credit accounts if you can. In any case, force them down to a minimum.

When delivery service is sharply curtailed and a self-service plan is installed, you can at the same time curtail the use of credit, for customers associate self-service with the cash-and-carry plan.

If you must continue granting credit, consider the use of coupon books. Under this plan the customer is sold a book of coupons calling for \$10 or \$20 worth of merchandise. Coupons are used like cash when buying goods, and when the book is used up the customer buys another book.

In this way you reduce your bookkeeping costs and misunderstandings with customers, and eliminate bad debt losses.

There should be a CONTROLLED CREDIT PLAN

WHEN you extend credit a definite system should be adopted and all of your customers should be thoroughly acquainted with it. There should be a "controlled" credit plan, over which you have a real control. The plan should be formulated in accordance with the type of customers you have and their usual paydays. This will vary in different communities. In some cases strict rules should be laid down for weekly settlements, or settlements on each "payday" of the customers. At the outside, settlements once a month should be required.

By letting a customer get too far in debt with you, you are doing him a disservice and not only may suffer bad debt losses but lose the account in addition.

In controlling credit, it is imperative to have records that will show you the amount owed you by customers, the amounts collected, the total amount of credit business done, and the individual accounts which are slow and need your personal attention.

Post-war shifts in population should be anticipated. Tight credit control is especially necessary in war time "boom towns" for this reason.

It is good business to

KEEP GOOD RECORDS

WHY do so many retailers go out of business? One out of five grocers discontinue business in the first year of operation, and only three out of ten stay in business as long as seven years. One reason for high mortality is certainly lack of adequate records. Of 30 retailers who failed, according to one study, only 2 had ever attempted to prepare profit and loss statements or balance sheets.

It is important, however, that the records be simple. Study your system and see if you have any reports that are not used, or paper work that is not necessary. The Department of Commerce has prepared a booklet on the subject which merits your examination*

Better records indicate a better business man, and simplify the job of preparing your income tax report. The numerous Federal and State regulations in force at the present time require information that can only be obtained from records. As long as some records have to be maintained, it is best to consolidate the whole job into a well worked out plan.

You cannot plan, and you cannot analyze your business, your expenses, your profits, or determine the cause of losses without suitable records.

* "Record Keeping for Small Stores" tells you how to set up a simple record system. Copies may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. (Price 30 cents per copy.)

A SIMPLE RECORD SYSTEM

can answer many questions

A SIMPLE but adequate record system can answer the following questions:

How much business (cash and charge) am I doing?

How much am I collecting on my charge business?

How much do my customers owe me now (both current and past due), and can my business stand this much?

How much cash do I have on hand and in the bank? Is this the amount I **SHOULD** have on hand or is there any cash shortage?

How much stock (inventory) do I have on hand?

How much merchandise do I take out of my store for personal or family use which I do not consider as sales?

How much money do I owe my wholesalers and others?

How much gross margin do I earn?

How much net profit (if any) did I earn?

How much income tax will I have to pay?

What is my net worth; that is, what is the amount of my proprietorship in the store?

What are the trends in my sales, expenses, profits, net worth, etc.; that is, how is my store progressing from year to year? How does my store compare with other stores in the same line of business?

What are the weak or unprofitable spots in my store?

Surely these are practical questions which the retailer must ask about his business if he is to control his costs and operate a profitable store.

It is a wise policy to BE A GOOD CUSTOMER TO A FEW SUPPLIERS

IN the long run you will find it cheaper and more satisfactory to buy everything you can from the smallest possible number of suppliers. It is true that this policy is difficult to adhere to under today's conditions, when it is often necessary to call on several wholesalers in order to get certain products which cannot be found in all wholesale houses at the same time. But even if shortages of some products justify "shopping around" there are definite advantages to being a good customer to a very few suppliers, instead of a poor customer to many suppliers.

The advantages of concentrating your business with a few suppliers are:

Better treatment on scarce goods.

Less time lost in buying.

Better credit rating.

Better treatment on necessary returned goods.

Better service on ration coupons.

More dependable deliveries.

Less danger of being dropped if retailer is in a remote location.

Reduces bookkeeping work, and time spent with salesmen.

Better balanced stocks and less duplication.

If you must shop for scarce items, reduce the shopping to a minimum. Do not spread your business more thinly among suppliers than is absolutely necessary.

COOPERATE

with your wholesaler

A WHOLESALER, today more than ever, is in a position to do the retailer many favors. Naturally, he will favor his better customers, not necessarily his largest customers, but those who cooperate with him, help him to reduce his own costs, and cause him the least trouble and expense.

Specifically, you can help your wholesaler to reduce expenses, save equipment and supplies, and conserve manpower if you will:

1. Order in quantities economical to dealers.
2. Plan your orders so they will fit in with curtailed delivery programs of the wholesaler.
3. Pay bills promptly, and do not ask for unreasonable credit terms, datings, or discounts.
4. Avoid returning goods unless the wholesaler is at fault, by more careful ordering.
5. Accept substitute products philosophically.
6. Buy items on which your wholesaler can make a profit.

After the war, your wholesaler will remember which retailers cooperated with him just as you will not forget which wholesalers helped you and which ones gave you shabby treatment during the emergency.

Your *TRADE ASSOCIATIONS* and *TRADE PAPERS* are real helps

THE services extended to retailers by their trade associations, local and national, and the excellent material appearing in trade papers have been one of the brightest spots in the retail trade in recent years. A retailer who is really serious about his success in business can scarcely afford not to be a member of his local and national trade association, nor can he afford not to receive and be guided by his trade papers. These services are of the greatest value, and very necessary. This is about the only way in which the retailer can keep up-to-date with current regulations and their interpretation, and with what is going on in his trade.

Briefly outlined, the trade papers will keep you informed on the following points:

- Government wartime regulations and their meaning.
- Records to be kept, and how to keep them.
- Merchandising aids and selling helps.
- Expense reduction.
- News of your trade.
- New merchandise and special offers of manufacturers.
- Best operating methods.
- New selling ideas.
- Store arrangement.
- How to train and manage personnel.

Many decisions dealing with wartime economies are on a voluntary basis and should be made only through discussion and cooperation with other local retailers. These discussions are made possible through membership in local and national trade associations and participation in group discussions, where plans of action to meet the situation are agreed upon.

Trade associations are doing an excellent job in putting retailing on a higher level, to the advantage of both the consumer and the retailer himself.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE FIELD OFFICES

Atlanta 3, Georgia 78 Marietta Street	Los Angeles 12, California 312 North Spring Street
Boston 9, Massachusetts 1800 Customhouse	Memphis 3, Tennessee Madison at Front Street
Buffalo 3, New York 117 Ellicott Street	Minneapolis 1, Minnesota Washington Ave. at Third Ave., South
Charleston 3, So. Carolina Chamber of Commerce Building	New Orleans 12, Louisiana 203 Carondelet Street
Chicago 4, Illinois 225 South Clark Street	New York 18, N. Y. 500 Fifth Avenue
Cincinnati 2, Ohio Chamber of Commerce	Philadelphia 2, Penna. 1510 Chestnut Street
Cleveland 14, Ohio Euclid Ave. at East 9th Street	Pittsburgh 19, Pennsylvania 7th Ave. & Grant Street
Dallas 2, Texas 1101 Commerce Street	Portland 4, Oregon 520 S. W. Morrison Street
Denver 2, Colorado 518 Customhouse	Richmond 19, Virginia 801 East Broad St.
Detroit 26, Michigan 230 West Fort Street	St. Louis 1, Missouri 1114 Market Street
Houston 14, Texas Corner Fannin & Franklin Streets	San Francisco 11, California Washington & Battery Sts.
Jacksonville 1, Florida 311 West Monroe Street	Savannah, Georgia U. S. Post Office & Court House
Kansas City 6, Missouri 1004 Baltimore Avenue	Seattle 4, Washington First & Marion

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

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▲ DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE FIELD OFFICES

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|--|--|
| Atlanta 3, Georgia
78 Marietta Street | Los Angeles 12, California
312 North Spring Street |
| ▲ Boston 9, Massachusetts
1800 Customhouse | Memphis 3, Tennessee
Madison at Front Street |
| Buffalo 3, New York
117 Ellicott Street | Minneapolis 1, Minnesota
Washington Ave. at Third Ave., South |
| ▲ Charleston 3, So. Carolina
Chamber of Commerce Building | New Orleans 12, Louisiana
203 Carondelet Street |
| Chicago 4, Illinois
225 South Clark Street | New York 18, N. Y.
500 Fifth Avenue |
| ▲ Cincinnati 2, Ohio
Chamber of Commerce | Philadelphia 2, Penna.
1510 Chestnut Street |
| Cleveland 14, Ohio
Euclid Ave. at East 9th Street | Pittsburgh 19, Pennsylvania
7th Ave. & Grant Street |
| Dallas 2, Texas
1101 Commerce Street | Portland 4, Oregon
520 S. W. Morrison Street |
| Denver 2, Colorado
518 Customhouse | Richmond 19, Virginia
801 East Broad St. |
| Detroit 26, Michigan
230 West Fort Street | St. Louis 1, Missouri
1114 Market Street |
| ▲ Houston 14, Texas
Corner Fannin & Franklin Streets | San Francisco 11, California
Washington & Battery Sts. |
| Jacksonville 1, Florida
311 West Monroe Street | Savannah, Georgia
U. S. Post Office & Court House |
| ▲ Kansas City 6, Missouri
1004 Baltimore Avenue | Seattle 4, Washington
First & Marion |

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